

Exercise Safety

Always talk to your doctor about starting any exercise routine, especially if you:

- Are elderly
- Currently smoke
- Have any health problems
- Are overweight or obese
- Have not been active in the past
- Are currently pregnant
- Are unsure of your health status
- Feel pain in your chest, joints, or muscles during activity

Sometimes you may not feel like exercising. If you're feeling a little tired or low on energy, try to complete your routine. The workout will likely boost your energy level and your mood. However, if you're not feeling well—if you think you might be getting sick, coming down with a cold or the flu; or if you have any kind of pain or swelling—take a break from exercising and, if necessary, contact your doctor. Your health and safety are top priority.

The reasons listed below are good cause to take a day off from strength training. Be cautious. If you're not sure whether you're well enough to exercise, take a break and see how you feel the next day.

Refrain from exercising or check with your doctor first if you:

- have a cold, flu, or infection accompanied by fever
- have significantly more fatigue than usual
- have a swollen or painful muscle or joint
- have any new or undiagnosed symptom
- have chest pain, or irregular, rapid, or fluttery heartbeat
- have shortness of breath
- have a hernia, with symptoms
- have been advised by your doctor not to exert yourself for a given period of time due to illness, surgery, etc.

Listen to your body. As you get used to your exercise program, you will know when you're well enough to handle a workout and when you need to take a day off or see your doctor.

Exercise Intensity Indicator

Ask yourself these questions after each exercise.

1. Were you able to complete two sets of ten repetitions in good form?
No: Reduce the weight to an amount that you can lift ten times in good form; rest for one or two minutes, then repeat for a second set.
Yes: Please continue to question two.
2. After completing ten repetitions, do you need to rest because the weight is too heavy to complete more repetitions in good form?
Yes: You are working at the proper intensity and should not increase weight.
No: Please continue to questions three and four to determine how to safely increase the intensity of your workout.
3. Could you have done a few more repetitions in good form without a break?
Yes: If you can do only a few more repetitions (not the entire next set of ten without a break), then at your next workout you should do the first set of repetitions with your current weight and your second set with the next weight up. For example, if you're currently using one-pound dumbbells, use two- or three-pound dumbbells for your second set.
4. Could you have done all twenty repetitions at one time, without a break?
Yes: At your next session, use heavier dumbbells for both sets of repetitions.

Side Note #1: Remember that you should complete each repetition in proper form, using the "two-up, four-down" count.

Side Note #2: When you start doing the exercises with the adjustable ankle weights, you will be able to increase intensity by adding half- or one-pound weights to each leg.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention - [Physical Activity for Everyone](#)